

## **Guidance on using Response to Intervention (RTI) in Preschool and Kindergarten Classrooms**

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RTI was written into law with the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The concept of RTI builds on recommendation made by the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education in 2002 that all children, regardless of learning difficulties, should first be considered general education students, embracing a model of prevention. RTI provides individual children with classroom-based interventions using ongoing assessment information, and input from teachers and families. Differentiated instruction is the hallmark of RTI, which is also a significant feature of a high quality early childhood curriculum.

There are many advertised publications, trainings, videos, and "how-to" manuals that purport to explain to general education and special education teachers and administrators how to use Response to Intervention (RTI). Each of these is an interpretation.

There are components of RTI that have been interpreted and implemented incorrectly and have resulted in inappropriate practices for educating young children; including pull-out instruction, deviation from a developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum and the teaching of skills outside of the context of daily routines and classroom activities.

The New Jersey Department of Education recommends that early childhood programs rely instead on high-quality, comprehensive, researched-based curricula and performance based assessments to support all areas of children's early learning. These models already use differentiated instruction to support children's learning and development during individual and group interactions and activities.

For young children with persistent challenging behaviors, NJDOE recommends the implementation of the Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) and the Pyramid model (<http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>, <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/preschool.html>). PBS can be embedded seamlessly with the early childhood curriculum and assessment and provides classroom-based intervention methods and strategies for children with challenging behavior.